NAQCC News

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1. SPRINT: Our sprint is this Wednesday evening, January 21st 8:30-10:30 PM EST (Thursday 0130-0330Z).

Our special award certificate for this sprint goes to the winner of a drawing among those making their all-time best score and having the highest score in their division. I have records of all scores here and know for sure if it is your all-time best score in case you have forgotten.

We also have our annual 160M sprint coming up the following evening, Thursday evening, January 22nd 8:30-10:30 PM EST (Friday 0130-0330Z).

There is no special award for this sprint, but in the special award field on the autologger, you MUST put "160M Sprint" to make it easy for me to separate logs for the two sprints.

If you're entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month we welcomed K4QO, KB1LZH, N7UN, AA4SD, K4MF, N0AR, KI6FEN, WB4HUX as first time participants and/or log submitters.

Remember this is only a brief overview of the coming sprints. Be sure to read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprints here.

2. DECEMBER CHALLENGE RESULTS: Before we get to the December results, let's sum up our first 50 challenges. Number 50 was the November 2008 challenge. Actually there were a couple more than that, but we combined our annual June FD challenge with the regular June challenge in compiling these stats.

Number of different members who participated = 91

Most participants in a challenge = 25 in our October 2007 N3A challenge.

Most participants in a non-N3A challenge = 17 in our November 2007 Turkey challenge.

Total participants in all 50 challenges = 387 for an average of 7.7 per challenge.

Participating in most challenges = 50 by K3WWP

Those participating in 12 or more challenges:

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K3WWP  -  50
KD2MX  -  24
NU7T   -  20
VE3HUR -  20
W2JEK  -  17
N1LU   -  14
K4PBY  -  13
VA3RKM -  13
W9ILF  -  13
KC2EGL -  12
N8XMS  -  12
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Longest current participation streaks = K3WWP (50), N8XMS (11)

It is interesting to note in studying the participation spreadsheet that once a member participated in a challenge, they became hooked and participated in most all challenges since that point. So why don't you give our challenges a try - you may become addicted also.

Now on to the December challenge report. Our NAQCC President Tom WY3H turned in an outstanding achievement in making 52 20 minute rag chews during the month under what generally were supposedly the worst possible propagation conditions. His performance supports the theory of many that conditions aren't really as bad as they seem - it's only that folks believe they are worse than they really are, and don't bother even getting on the bands. Naturally if no one gets on, the bands are going to sound dead. Other folks just tune the bands, hear no one, and QRT. Had they tried calling a few CQ's, they probably could have worked someone. I think Tom proved that with a little persistence, it's still possible to make good solid QSO's, even in the supposedly 'bad' condition we are in right now.

We had 7 other stations report results for the December challenge. The second best was John K3WWP with 14 rag chews followed by Frank KB3AAG with 10. Interesting to note that the top 3 rag chewers are from Western Pennsylvania. I guess we know how to gab here when the weather prevents us from doing other things like walking, fishing, etc.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - As a continuing show of friendship and cooperation between FISTS and the NAQCC, Nancy WZ8C has said that once again this year FISTS will offer a free one year membership or renewal to the overall high scorer in our 2009 Participation award (K3WWP excluded). Our 2008 winner of a free FISTS membership was Don W2JEK. Congratulations to Don and thanks to FISTS.

- Speaking of FISTS, they've come up with a clever new award for 2009. We urge all our members to participate in either earning the award or helping others to earn it. Details can be

found here, but briefly it is awarded for working hams in 100 different telephone area codes anywhere in the world. The NAQCC President and Vice President have already gotten a start on the award.

- And speaking of awards as we continue to segue between items, we are restructuring our awards program a bit. We want to make all our awards more uniform as far as cost, endorsements, and log requirements go. Basically the fee for every award will now be our standard $3.00, and we have yet to decide about endorsements and logging. Stay tuned for further details as we get things settled down.

- We're planning something different and better for our 5th anniversary celebration in October this year. Hopefully we will be able to pull it off, but we need your help. We're not going to say anything more about it in public yet, but if you are interested in helping out, please contact us via email at **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** and we'll send you details in a few weeks to see if it would be something you'd be interested in. We're sure you will be.

- This issue "goes to press" just a day or two before Mike KC2EGL and I continue work on the KX-1 project. Mike will be on vacation for the coming week and we hope to put in 3 or 4 sessions of work on the kit. More in the KX-1 project section below.

- Don't forget that John K3WWP is donating a book on setting up wire antennas to the member who recruits the most new members to the club between January 1 and June 30, 2009. You must tell the person you recruit to be sure to list you as the source when they fill out the on-line application form to get a vote for yourself. Only calls appearing the source field of the application will be counted towards winning the book. As of the first 18 new members this year, K3WWP has 4 recruits (ineligible for the book, obviously) followed by N9AKF with 1 and SM3CER (non-member) with 1. So get out there and tell the folks you work that

- We had a nice influx of member photos for our picture gallery after my plea in the newsletter, but the members represented there are still only around 3-4 percent of our membership of 3,000+. So come on, send us your picture. Don't be bashful, shy, ashamed or whatever else is keeping you from sending a picture. We're proud of our members and want to show everyone what you look like lurking behind that key there.

3. KX-1 PROJECT - Update: - Starting tomorrow (the 18th), Mike and I hope to begin a week of work on the project and make considerable progress on the kit assembly. Since Mike works for the Postal Service, and also lives about 30 miles from me (K3WWP), it's not easy for us to get together. However Mike is on vacation this coming week, and if the weather permits, we

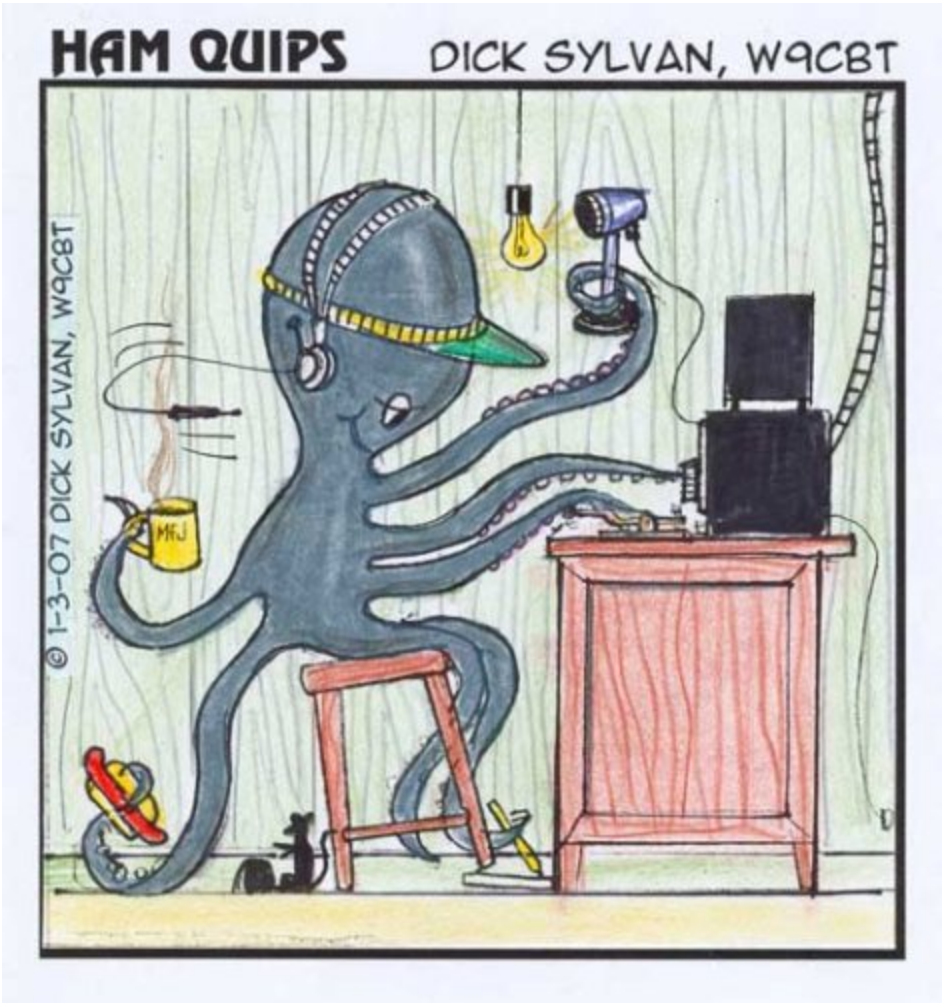
should be able to put in a good many hours on the kit, all of which will be fully documented exclusively here in a future newsletter or two (three?). We've gotten several comments on the project, most of which contain statements about being anxious to see how the project turns out. Well, Mike and I are anxious as well.

5. THE NAQCC ELMER PROJECT: - Ever since the club was started, and even before that, it was a goal of club President Tom WY3H to have the club help hams learn CW and increase their CW speed and skills through some sort of an Elmering program. After many false starts and delays, it now looks like the program is ready to get off the starting blocks in earnest. We hope so. This will be the responsibility of Ron K5DUZ, Karl N3IJR, and Fred KC8FS who will be running the program. We will have an Elmer section in each of our upcoming newsletters, and soon will have an Elmer section on the club web site.

Now here is an introductory article by Karl to tell you a little about their plans:

For some time now we have talked about an Elmer Project for our club. Ron K5DUZ and myself have batted things around. I know that in the New Year we will be doing more. As many of you know, the basis of our club is to promote the use of Morse code. We also want very much to help others to become more proficient and enjoy the Art and Skill of Telegraphy. I will not sing the praises of Code here but I will give you part of my vision and I believe the vision of our club founders. In the coming year I would like to see us develop a network of CW op's who would be willing to get on the air and help out those desiring to improve their skills. So, we must start somewhere and that is where I come in. I am volunteering to coordinate the on-air Elmer side of our project and to share, on a regular basis in the Newsletter, information and news on the CW front. I need your help. I would like to develop a list of Elmers who would be willing to get on the air and help others. Please email me at pix email n3ijr (1K) and let me know if you would be willing to help. I think this is where we need to start and I will keep you posted on our progress. I think others would also share in the concept that it would be nice to have an on air slow net. There are many more things we could do, but it will take all of us working together. I lay this before you and hope for a good response. 73 es 72 Karl/N3IJR #1770

5. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH: Let's take a comedy break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to be one of just two organizations to feature Dick's cartoons. In addition to our newsletter, Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine where he is the staff cartoonist. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site. A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.



5. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS: There is apparently some misunderstanding about what this section is for. Quite simply it's a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

(disclaimer) Any views expressed here are those of the member submitting them, and may not be in agreement with those of the NAQCC.

- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** One of my goals for 2009 is to learn to send CW left-handed as well as I can right-handed. I feel that I am approaching that point already after only a few hours practice. Although I'm doing it just for fun and no specific reason, it could come in handy sometime in the future should I no longer be able to send right-handed for any reason. Something to think about. I would certainly not want to give up the most wonderful of all ham radio modes, and this will be kind of an insurance policy to hopefully keep me going if....

Also it is a great stimulus for the brain. We all need to exercise our brains as much as we can. Once we stop using our brains, they begin to atrophy just like any other part of the body that is not used regularly. I'm always looking for new interests here, and I feel that everyone should do so also. Sending right-handed has become so automatic, that I'm sure it doesn't offer much brain exercise for me, but I do notice I have to do more thinking when I send left handed, especially using my paddles. In fact, I haven't tried using the paddles on the air yet as I still

haven't mastered them well enough, but I'm trying and soon will subject some poor soul to a QSO with my left-handed paddle sending. So far all my non-contest QSO's in January except one have been made left-handed straight key sending.

I wonder if I can get a left-handed endorsement for the new FISTS Area Code Award when I earn it. I just love everything that FISTS does for ham radio and CW in particular. I think this award is a stroke of genius, and I'm having a great time working on it. Check out the rules here and join in the fun and more importantly help to promote and increase CW activity along the way.

- **From Rick AA4W #1628 -** QRP GOES TO THE JUNGLE -- Beginning the 15th of February 2009 and running through the 25th, I will be operating portable from the jungles of Honduras.

I am going to Honduras to provide communications support for the International Health Service. IHS is a non-religious group that has sent teams of doctors and other medical staff to Honduras for the last 27 years to tend to the medical needs of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. This year IHS is sending ten medical field teams and two surgical teams to Honduras. Each team has an Amateur Radio Operator assigned to provide communications back to a central point. Operations utilize 40 meter SSB nets and also send written traffic using Winlink 2000 Email via the Pactor lll digital mode. Teams live in tents, bathe in rivers and take their own food, generators, etc., wherever they go! (Talk about the ultimate field day operation!)

My QTH will be in the village of Puerto Lamperia, located on the southeastern coast, just north of the Nicaraguan border. I will be manning the radio station for one of the surgical teams as well as acting as the net control station for the radio network. The workdays are long but I plan to be on 20 and 40 meters in the evenings (CW of course), and on Sunday the 22nd, to provide an opportunity for you to put a QRP contact to HR8 in your log.

For additional information on the International Health Service and to see how you might sign up for the 2010 trip, check out www.ihsofmn.org .

- **From Chris KU4A #1960 -** A couple of us that are members of KY-QRP went to Mt. Sterling KY to present our "QRP Road Show". One of the kids there shot some video on his cellphone and posted it on YouTube. Beginning at about the 5:30 mark, I put a plug in for NAQCC as my favorite QRP club.
QRP Road Show

- **From Gene KB3ONA #2384 -** I'm new to QRP and radio in general so for me every QRP contact is a big deal. Some of my recent records are as follows:
* 9/20/08, 2350Z, 14.058 MHz, 5 watts, LW1HPT, Argentina, 549 (5,818 miles from Phoenix to Buenos Aires for about 1,163 miles per watt).
* 12/1/08, 006Z, 14.037.85 MHz, 5 watts, LW3DG, Argentina, 529, (5,818 miles from Phoenix to Buenos Aires for about 1,163 miles per watt).
* 12/05/08, 1940Z, 14.058 MHz, 1 watt, N7EF, Washington, 569, (1,112 miles from Phoenix to Seattle for about 1,112 miles per watt).
* 12/23/08, 2350Z, 14.027 MHz, 5 watts, JF1FDO, Japan, 419, (5,806 miles from Phoenix to Tokyo for about 1,161 miles per watt).
* 12/27/08, 2320Z, 14.027 MHz, 5 watts JF1FDO again, 419, same mileage. I had to send info a couple times this go-around; propagation wasn't as good as 12/23.

Also this afternoon I had a short contact with N5SQL near Austin, TX. He gave me his name, QTH and a signal report. Then I gave him my info but I didn't hear back from him so I don't know if you'd count that one or not. I put him in my log since he gave me the relevent info. This

contact was interesting because it was with 1/2 watt. The distance according to Timeanddate.com is 871 miles between Phoenix and Austin, which translates into about 1,742 miles per watt.

My rig is a Yaesu FT817. For antennas I use: a Hygain 12AVQ ground mounted with 40 radials, a full wave 40m loop under the eaves of my house, a 30m wire vertical in my front tree with 16 radials, and a linear-loaded NVIS dipole for 80m six feet off ground and about 70 feet long alongside my house. I live in an antenna restricted neighborhood in Peoria, AZ so none of my gear is in the clear. The NVIS dipole doesn't just work for NVIS to my surprise. I contacted NL7Z in Wasilla, Alaska the first day I put it up. That contact wasn't QRP though, so I didn't mention it above. If anyone ever wants info on any of my gear I'd be more than happy to share it.

In addition to QRP operating I recently got involved in kit building and home brewing, assembling a Elecraft W1 SWR/Power Meter. Since the W1, I've built a Hendricks BLT, 2 Z-match tuners from scratch (boy they were fun), Norcal's 50 ohm Dummy Load, Norcal's Marker-Generator, and a portable battery enclosure with voltmeter for when you are on the road. I'm currently working on an OHR 100A for 20m and a SWR/Power meter (from scratch) from W1FB's QRP notebook.

- **From Nisha VU2NIS #2132 -** LAKSHADEEP DXPEDITION REMINISCENCES -- In connection with the silver jubilee celebration of the National Institute of Amateur Radio(NIAR) Hyderabad, a DXpedition to Lakshadweep and Andaman Islands was organized. Myself and my husband, Madhu Mohan S., VU2UWZ decided to go to Kadmat island in Lakshadeep. I had visited Kadmat in January 2007 and operated from there with the callsign VU7RG. During my stay on the island, I had decided to visit there again with my family. So this time our sons Manu, 11 years and Manish 10 years also accompanied us.

We left Hyderabad in the afternoon of 19th October 2008 by flight to Kochi and reached there by 4.30 pm. Some days earlier, we had sent our equipment and antennas by road from Hyderabad to Kochi. Besides our own equipment, NIAR loaned us some additional gear. After collecting those items, the next morning we boarded the ship M.V. Kavaratti around 10.00 am. It is a new ship, fully air conditioned. The sea was very rough and we reached near the Kadmat Island by the next evening. Since the ship cannot go near the jetty, we had to go by fishing boat.

This was really an adventurous trip with sea water splashing into the boat. It took half an hour to reach the island where we were welcomed by the locals. We met Shri Atta Koya, who is an officer in Information & Press. Then we went to the Keerthi Hotel where we had made bookings. After the dinner we went in search of a suitable shack and found a cool bar on the beach which was not in use. The next day morning we met its owner and managed to get it for rent.

Kadmat Island is located about 400 km from Kochi in Kerala, South West of India. It is about 8 km long and 550 Meters wide at the broadest point. It has beautiful shallow lagoons on the west and the east. The local language is Malayalam, which is also my mother tongue so it was easy for us to mingle with the locals.

In the afternoon of 22nd October 2008 we started installing the antennas. At first we installed a vertical on the beach in front of cool bar. The stay in the hotel was not comfortable so we shifted to the annex of Dak Bungalow of PWD which was 2 kms away from the cool bar. The next day we erected a vertical antenna near the beach close to the annex for me while my husband decided to stay in the cool bar. We also erected a yagi antenna near cool bar. It was really challenging for us to erect the antennas as it was windy and raining heavily. My vertical

antenna was not loading properly so my maximum power was 75 watts on both 7 and 14 MHz but I was able to use high power on 21 MHz.

At midnight of 23rd October 2008, we started our operation. I operated in CW mode only and my husband worked SSB and digital modes. Everyday by 8.00 am I had to stop my operation to clean the house, wash the clothes and take care of my sons. I had to walk 2 kms to Keerthi Hotel for my food. After four days my sons helped me by bringing the food packets so that I could save time.

It was really a problem for me to operate when my sons were in the shack. They would talk loudly during my QSOs. So I sent them outside where they spent their time playing cricket, fishing, sightseeing and playing with goats. They made friends with some locals.

We worked a lot of stations on various bands. As both our shacks were far away from each other,there was no mutual QRM. I operated for as long hours as was possible. On the second day of our operation, we erected an Icom AH 710 all-band folded dipole. My husband homebrewed four antennas for me on the island. I operated on all HF bands from 1.8 MHz to 28 MHz. We used the following equipments:

Shack-1, OP- OM Madhu VU2UWZ,(Beach Cool bar, Near Port Tower, Kadmat Jetty) 2-Yeasu FT 840, Yeasu FL 7000 Linear, 6 Ele Triband beam, Hustler 6BT Vertical, Acer TravelMate 4061 Laptop-1

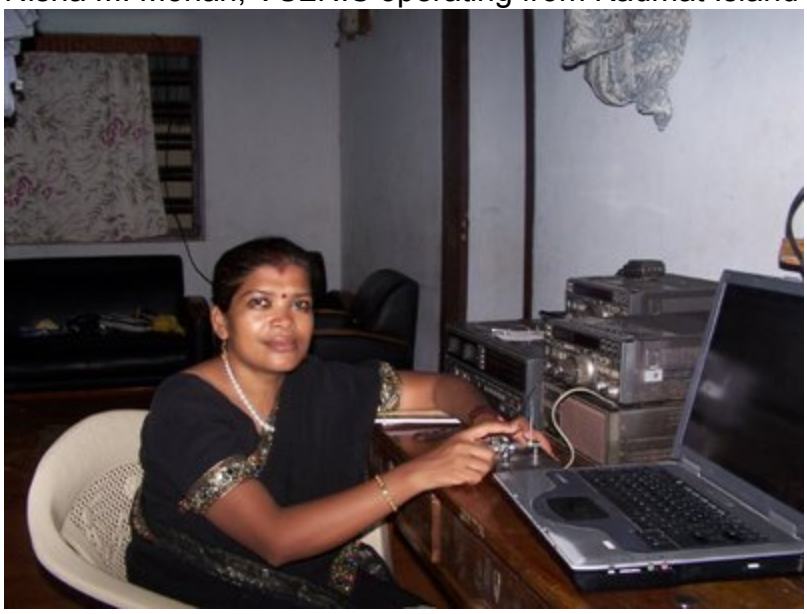
Shack-2 OP- YL Nisha, VU2NIS, (PWD Dak Bungalow Annex), 2-Yeasu FT 757GX, Yeasu FL 7000 Linear, Hygain Vertical 14AVQ, Icom AH 710 All band folded dipole, Compaq Presario laptop, Homebrewed Antennas (all antennas homebrewed in Kadmat by VU2UWZ as per the requirement of VU2NIS), Off centre dipole 80/40/20 M -1 No., Inverted "V", (a) 20/40 Mtr, (b) 30 Mtr, (C) 15 Mtr

When the expedition was about to finish we started sightseeing in the morning. We visited the Kadmat Light House, which has the identification number of WLOTA 1575. We went snorkeling and for a ride in a glass-bottomed boat. We gave a demonstration to the local students of Government High School and also visited the local coconut desiccating factory.

We made a total of 13755 QSOs of which I made 8000 QSOs with CW. We returned by same ship on 5th November 2008. It was an interesting family DXpedition for us. We are thankful to NIAR for getting us permission from the Ministry to operate from Kadmat with the special callsign VU7NRO. I am also thankful to my principal, Smt Snehasuta Shadangi of Kendriya Vidyalaya No2, Uppal, Hyderabad for granting me leave for the expedition and for the encouragement. I hope to participate in future expeditions.

Madhu Mohan S, VU2UWZ erecting beam antenna at boat jetty and operating from the beach cool bar on Kadmat Island

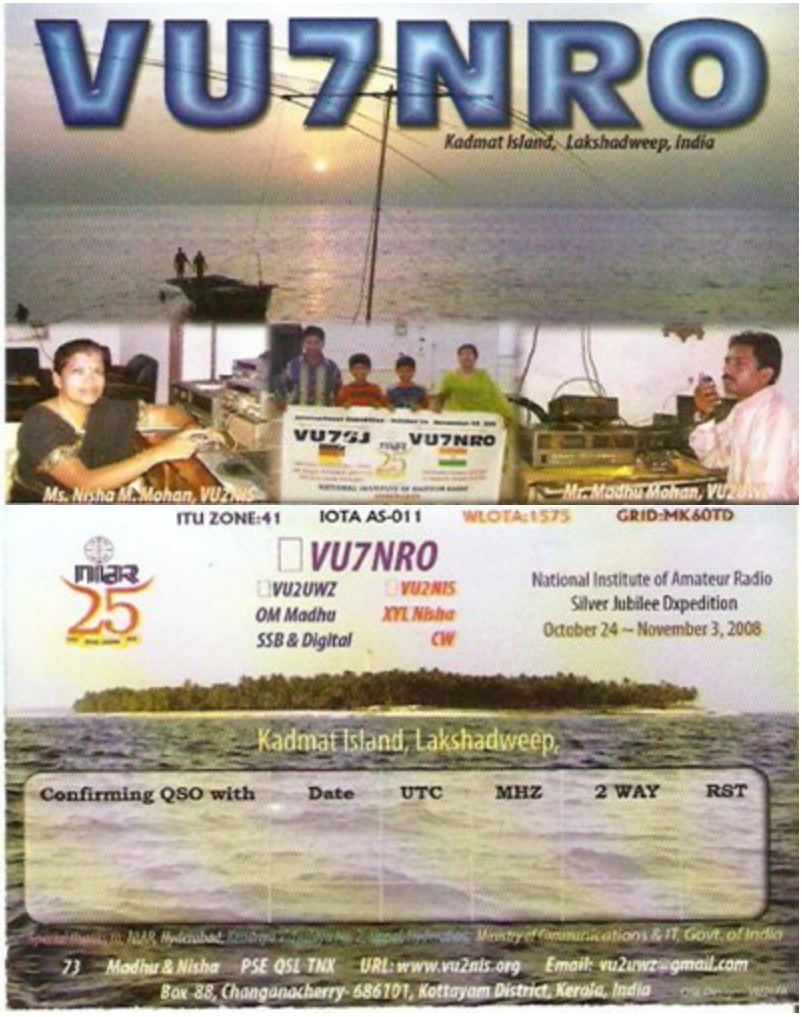
Nisha M. Mohan, VU2NIS operating from Kadmat Island



SWL Manish, VU2UWZ,VU2NIS AND SWL Manu in front of the office of the Port Assistant on

Kadmat

Our QSL cards



VU2UWZ, SWL Manu, SWL Manish & VU2NIS on the deck of the ship M V Kavarati

- **From Randy KB4QQJ #2086 -** I wanted to let everybody know that the SKCC has secured the call K3Y for the month-long CW special event, and a clever choice it is. "3Y", meaning 3 years, and "K3Y" looks distinctly like the word KEY, a particularly appropriate reference. The Special Event runs through until the end of January. Come join the fun here: Special CW Event

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless they specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.